REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated June 22, 2006. Claims 1, 17, 31, 39, 52, 61 and 62 have been amended. No new matter has been added by any of these amendments. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.

A Petition for a Three Month Extension of Time to file this Response is submitted herewith. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 to cover the cost of the Three Month Extension of Time, and for any fees due in connection with the filing of this Response.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 61 and 62 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Locke, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,561,904; hereafter "Locke"). The Office Action rejected Claims 2 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Locke.

Applicants note that the Office Action mentioned "Nash" in the body of the rejection (page 8). The Examiner also mentions on page 13 of the Office Action that "Locke is not relied upon solely for the redress of this feature as presented in the rejections of at least claims 1, 61, and 62 as presented above." It is unclear to the Applicants whether "Nash" was intended to be used in the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 61 and 62. If "Nash" was intended to be used in the rejection, Applicants request that the Examiner provide a copy or some other identification of "Nash" so that Applicants can properly respond to the rejection. If "Nash" was not intended to be used in the rejection, Applicants request that the Examiner provide an explanation to clarify the record. Additionally, the Office Action incorrectly cites MPEP §2306 as relating to inappropriate affidavits. MPEP §2306 relates to the prosecution of applicants under secrecy orders not with inappropriate affidavits as stated in the Office Action. Accordingly, due to these discrepancies, Applicants request that any subsequent Office Action be made non-final so that Applicants have a proper opportunity to respond to any pending rejections.

The Office Action stated that the Affidavit of Anthony J. Baerlocher, which was submitted by Applicants in the Response to Office Action mailed on July 13, 2004, is not effective to overcome Locke. The Office Action takes the position that the present application is claiming the same subject matter as Locke. Applicants disagree. Nevertheless, to expedite prosecution of this application, independent claims 1, 61 and 62 have been further amended to further ensure that those claims are not claiming the same subject matter as Locke. As described below, all of the claims of Locke require the group of possible payout multipliers to vary with the respective outcomes.

More specifically, Claims 1, 9, 13, 14 and 15 of Locke are set forth below.

1. A method of conducting a game of chance on a gaming machine controlled by a processor, comprising:
receiving a wager from a player;
randomly selecting a plurality of outcomes;
representing the outcomes with respective successive selections of game indicia;
selecting a payout multiplier for each of the respective outcomes from a group of possible payout multipliers, the group of possible payout multipliers varying with the respective outcomes;
awarding payouts for the respective outcomes according to a pay table; and
multiplying each payout by the respective selected payout multiplier.

9. A method of conducting a game of chance on a gaming machine controlled by a processor, comprising:
receiving a wager from a player;
randomly selecting a primary game outcome from a plurality of possible primary game outcomes;
in response to the primary game outcome being a bonus triggering outcome, randomly selecting a plurality of secondary game outcomes;
representing the secondary game outcomes with respective successive free spins of a plurality of symbol-bearing reels, wherein in each free spin the reels are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with a symbol array;
selecting a payout multiplier for each of the respective secondary game outcomes from a group of possible payout multipliers, the group of possible payout multipliers varying with the respective secondary game outcomes;

awarding payouts for the respective secondary game outcomes according to a pay table; and

multiplying each payout by the respective selected payout multiplier.

13.   A method of conducting a game of chance on a gaming machine controlled by a processor, comprising:

receiving a wager from a player;

randomly selecting a plurality of outcomes;

representing the outcomes with respective successive spins of a plurality of symbol-bearing reels, wherein in each spin the reels are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with a symbol array;

selecting a payout multiplier for each of the respective outcomes from a group of possible payout multipliers, the group of possible payout multipliers varying with the respective outcomes;

awarding payouts for the respective outcomes according to a pay table; and

multiplying each payout by the respective selected payout multiplier.

14.   A gaming machine controlled by a processor in response to a wager, comprising:

means for randomly selecting a plurality of outcomes;

means for representing the outcomes with respective successive selections of game indicia;

means for selecting a payout multiplier for each of the respective outcomes from a group of possible payout multipliers, the group of possible payout multipliers varying with the respective outcomes;

means for awarding payouts for the respective outcomes according to a pay table; and

means for multiplying each payout by the respective selected payout multiplier.

15.   A gaming machine controlled by a processor in response to a wager, comprising:

means for randomly selecting a plurality of outcomes;

means for representing the outcomes with respective successive spins of a plurality of symbol-bearing reels, wherein in each spin the reels are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with a symbol array;

> **means for selecting a payout multiplier for each of the respective outcomes from a group of possible payout multipliers, the group of possible payout multipliers varying with the respective outcomes;**
>
> means for awarding payouts for the respective outcomes according to a pay table; and
>
> means for multiplying each payout by the respective selected payout multiplier.

As indicated in bold above, all of the claims in Locke require a payout multiplier selected from a group of possible payout multipliers where the group of possible payout multipliers varies with the respective outcomes. (See also Col. 1, lines 56-62). Therefore, the payout multipliers claimed in Locke are selected from varying groups of multipliers. The multiplier for each outcome is not dependent on which multiplier was selected for each previous outcome. On the other hand,

(1) amended independent claims 1 and 61 each recite a plurality of multipliers associated with free spins of reels and a processor programmed to (i) pick at least a first one of the multipliers and a second different one of the multipliers during the free spins of the reels and (ii) determine a value of the second different multiplier <u>based on a value of the first multiplier being previously picked</u>; and

(2) amended independent claim 62 recites a plurality of multipliers associated with free spins of bonus reels and a processor programmed to (i) determine an award, if any, to provide to the player based upon the bonus symbols occurring on the bonus reels after each free spin and the multiplier associated with each free spin, and (ii) change a value of the multiplier to a predetermined amount at least once during a plurality of free spins of bonus reels <u>based on a value of the previous multiplier</u>.

Accordingly, <u>Locke does not claim the same subject matter as independent claims 1, 61 and 62 (and dependent claims 3, 4 and 6)</u> and the amended independent

claims 1, 61 and 62 are patentably distinguished over Locke for the reasons given below.

Applicants note that the Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 61 and 62 under U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Locke. This rejection is further support that <u>Locke does not claim the same subject matter as independent claims 1, 61 and 62 (and dependent claims 3, 4 and 6).</u>

Page 6 of the Office Action also states:

> The presented amendment attempts to create a delineation between the claimed invention and the prior art of Locke based on function limitation directed to the manner in which the apparatus is employed to derive subsequent multipliers. It is noted that pages 7 through 8 of the Applicant's specification teaches this particular manner of determination as being a non-critical element of the claimed invention, capable of being incorporated in various alternative manners including the manner as taught by Locke (Applicant's specification page 9 considered in light of the Applicant's statements concerning the teachings of Locke on page 22 of the Applicant's Remarks presented March 20, 2006. [*sic*].

Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 61 and 62 to clarify the specific structure in question and to further ensure that these claims are not anticipated by Locke.

Locke discloses a slot machine including a base game and a free spin feature. The free spin feature is triggered upon the occurrence of a special start-feature symbol or a special combination of symbols on the reels in the base game. When the free spin feature is triggered, the slot machine provides a plurality of free spins to the player. The slot machine also displays a group of multipliers to be selected. Before each free spin, the slot machine randomly selects one of the multipliers in the group. Selected or specific multipliers are removed from the group for subsequent free spins. The reels are activated and if a winning outcome occurs, the award associated with the winning outcome is multiplied by the selected multiplier for that free spin. The multiplier for each free spin is selected independently from the multiplier selected for each previous free

spin. Accordingly, the multiplier selected for each free spin is not based on values of multipliers selected for previous free spins. As a result, multipliers having a same or lesser value are available to be selected during subsequent free spins.

Page 12 of the Office Action states:

> On page 22 of the Applicant's remarks, the Applicant proposes the following interpretation of Locke '[s]elected multipliers are removed from the group for subsequent free spins'. However, upon the review of Locke the removal of multiplier options is based upon a prior selection of any multiplier and in other words the selection that is removed need not be the multiplier selected (Locke Col 4:49-51, 4:58-61) [sic].

In one embodiment of Locke (col. 4, lines 58 to 65), the outermost pair of hourglasses and their associated multipliers (i.e., "selected or specific multipliers") are removed for subsequent free spins. In other embodiments of Locke (col. 5, line 64 to col. 6, line 5), the "selected or specific multipliers" referred to by Applicants above can be the highest pair of multipliers or randomly chosen multipliers. The use of the term "selected or specific multipliers" does not imply that Locke removes the multipliers randomly selected by the slot machine as the multiplier to be removed for a subsequent free spin.

Pages 12 and 13 of the Office Action state:

> Additionally, the Applicant proposes, '[t]he random selection of the multiplier for each free spin is independent of the selection of the multiplier for each previous free spin.' The term 'independent' could be interpreted by some to suggest that there is absolutely no relationship between the Locke's selection of a multiplier and a subsequent selection of a multiplier however, as each selection effects the odds of a subsequent selection, there must be at the very least some degree relation between the selections [sic].

It appears that the Office Action is stating that Locke's selection of a multiplier is dependent on Locke's selection of a previous multiplier. However, the multiplier selected for each free spin of Locke is not determined by or contingent on which multiplier was selected for each previous free spin or the value of a previously selected multiplier.

More specifically, the values of the multipliers for each free spin of Locke are not based on values of multipliers selected in previous free spins. For a first free spin of Locke, multipliers having values of 1x, 2x, 3x, and 5x are available. As illustrated in Fig. 4, the multipliers 1x, 2x and 3x occur multiple times. The slot machine randomly selects one of the available multipliers (e.g., 5x). Specific multipliers (e.g., two 1x multipliers) are removed for the second free spin of Locke. For the second free spin, multipliers having values of 1x, 2x, 3x, and 5x are available. Although the probability for each multiplier (e.g., 1x, 2x, 3x, and 5x) changes after the specific multipliers (e.g., two 1x multipliers) are removed from play, the values of the multipliers for the second free spin (e.g., 1x, 2x, 3x, and 5x) are not affected by the value of the multiplier selected in the first free spin (e.g., 5x). For the second free spin, the slot machine randomly selects one of the available multipliers (e.g., 1x, 2x, 3x, and 5x). Accordingly, Locke does not determine the value of the multiplier for the second free spin based on the value of the multiplier for the first free spin.

According to the Office Action (pages 7 and 8), it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to increase a multiplier value at least once by a predetermined amount during the free spins of the bonus reels in the game of Locke because, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have recognized to increment the multiplier. Applicants disagree with this reasoning and submit that increasing multiplier values by a predetermined amount during the free spins of Locke would not be an obvious design choice. Locke does not teach, disclose or suggest increasing multiplier values by a predetermined amount during the free spins. Substantial modification of Locke would be required to implement this reasoning. First, the multiplier for each free spin would not be randomly selected. Second, in the embodiment of Locke shown in Figs. 4 to 7, Locke provides five free

spins and multipliers having four multiplier values (e.g., 1x, 2x, 3x, and 5x). In this form, Locke can not increase the multiplier value in each of the five free spins. At least one of the free spins would provide a multiplier with the same multiplier value as a previous free spin. These modifications are not taught or suggested in Locke. Additionally, paragraph [0026] of Applicants' specification states one advantage of providing a multiplier that increments after each game is to provide larger awards to players. This advantage provides additional support for why increasing multiplier values by a predetermined amount during the free spins of Locke would not be an obvious design choice. Moreover, as discussed below, independent Claim 62 specifically includes a processor programmed to change a value of the multiplier to a predetermined amount at least once during the free spins of the bonus reels based on a value of the previous multiplier. Locke does not disclose, teach or suggest a processor as in Claim 62.

Independent claim 1 includes, among other elements, a processor that is programmed to (i) determine an award, if any, to provide to the player for each free spin based upon the symbols occurring on the reels from the free spin and based on one of the multipliers picked from the plurality of multipliers, (ii) pick at least a first one of the multipliers and a second different one of the multipliers during the plurality of free spins of the reels and (iii) determine a value of the second different multiplier based on a value of the first multiplier being previously picked. Locke does not disclose, teach, suggest or claim this combination. For example, Locke does not include a processor programmed to pick at least a first one of the multipliers and a second different one of the multipliers during the free spins because Locke does not preclude the processor from picking the same multiplier (e.g., 5x) for each free spin. Additionally, in Locke, the multiplier for each free spin is selected independently from the multiplier selected for each previous free spin and the values of the multiplier for each free spin are not based on values of multipliers selected in previous free spins. Accordingly, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2 to 6 are patentably distinguished over Locke and in condition for allowance.

Similarly, independent claim 61 includes, among other elements, a processor that is programmed to: (i) determine an award, if any, to provide to the player for each

free spin based on the symbols occurring on the reels from the free spin and a picked one of the multipliers associated with the free spin, (ii) pick at least a first one of the multipliers and a second different one of the multipliers during the plurality of free spins of the reels, (iii) determine a value of the second different multiplier based on a value of the first multiplier being previously picked. Locke does not disclose or claim this combination. For example, Locke does not include a processor programmed to pick at least a first one of the multipliers and a second different one of the multipliers during the free spins because Locke does not preclude the processor from picking the same multiplier (e.g., 5x) for each free spin. Additionally, in Locke, the multiplier for each free spin is selected independently from the multiplier selected for each previous free spin and the values of the multiplier for each free spin are not based on values of multipliers selected in previous free spins. Accordingly, independent claim 61 and is patentably distinguished over Locke and in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 62 includes, among other elements, a processor that is programmed to control a plurality of base and bonus reels, whereupon the occurrence of a triggering event on the base reels, the processor is programmed to: (i) initiate the bonus game, (ii) provide a plurality of free spins of the bonus reels to a player, (iii) determine an award, if any, to provide to the player based upon the bonus symbols occurring on the bonus reels after each free spin and the multiplier associated with each free spin, and (iv) change a value of the multiplier by a predetermined amount at least once during the free spins of the bonus reels based on a value of the previous multiplier. Locke does not disclose or claim this combination. In Locke, the multiplier for each free spin is selected independently from the multiplier selected for each previous free spin and the values of the multiplier for each free spin are not based on values of multipliers selected in previous free spins. Furthermore, in Locke, the value of the multiplier does not change to a predetermined amount at least once during the free spins of the bonus reels based on a value of the previous multiplier. Although the Office Action suggests that Locke teaches changing a multiplier value within a preset range on page 13, Locke does not disclose, teach or suggest, changing the value of the multiplier to a predetermined amount at least once during the free spins based on a value of the

previous multiplier. Accordingly, independent claim 62 and is patentably distinguished over Locke and in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 7 to 60 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Locke, et al. in view of Wilson, Jr., et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,004,207; hereafter "Wilson, Jr.").

As described above, Locke discloses a slot machine including a base game and a free spin feature. During the free spin feature, the slot machine provides a plurality of free spins to the player and randomly selects a multiplier for each free spin. The multiplier for each free spin of Locke is selected independently from which multiplier was selected for each previous free spin. The Office Action stated that Locke is silent regarding the inclusion of an incrementor symbol and relies on Wilson, Jr. to teach the incrementor symbol. As described in the Office Action, Wilson, Jr. teaches a slot machine with an incremental pay-off multiplier that appears on reels of the slot machine during a primary game and increases a multiplier by a fixed or random amount to provide a significant incentive for a player to continue to play the slot machine. The multiplier of Wilson, Jr. is increased for every ten power point symbols that appear on the reels in a primary game (col. 5, lines 43-48). Only nine power point symbols are possible for each spin of the reels (col. 5, lines 25-30) which do not constitute enough power point symbols to increase the multiplier in any one spin of the reels.

The Office Action pointed to Claim 14 of Wilson, Jr. as additional support for an increasing multiplier. Claim 14 of Wilson, Jr. teaches increasing the multiplier as a function of symbols selected for display on a set of spinning reels. Thus, for the multiplier to increase, specific symbols must be displayed on the reels. As described above, these specific symbols include ten power point symbols, which must be displayed or accumulated on the reels for the multiplier to increase. The increasing multiplier of Wilson, Jr. does not increase for each spin and can not increase for each spin in the embodiment of Wilson, Jr. illustrated in Figs 2 to 7.

Contrary to the Office Action, Wilson, Jr. does not teach a slot machine that increases a multiplier by a random amount. The multiplier in Wilson has a preselected range (col. 3, lines 50 to 53). During game play, the multiplier starts at an initial value

(col. 4, lines 32 to 38) and is incremented based on outcomes in the primary game (col. 3, lines 50 to 53). For example, the multiplier of Wilson, Jr. is increased by one for every ten power point symbols that appear on the reels in a primary game (col. 5, lines 43-48). It appears that the Examiner is confusing a random selection of one of the values listed in the Multiplier Tables (Figs. 5A, 5B and 5C) as a random selection of the multiplier. For example, when a specific game outcome occurs in the primary game, a payout value or base award is associated with that specific game outcome. The base award is randomly selected from the values listed in the Multiplier Tables. The multiplier is multiplied by the randomly selected base award to generate a payout (col. 4, line 63 to col. 5, line 5). For these reasons, the multiplier of Wilson, Jr. is not randomly selected.

The Office Action stated that a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would be motivated to employ the multiplier symbol of Wilson, Jr. as one of the symbols in Locke in order to provide increased excitement and anticipation of the game as taught by Wilson, Jr. Applicants disagree and submit that the proposed modification of employing the incrementing multiplier or power point symbol of Wilson, Jr. to the gaming device of Locke is a product of impermissible hindsight since the incrementing multiplier or power point symbol of Wilson, Jr. teaches away from and destroys the free spin feature of Locke. In Locke, the free spin feature or secondary game is triggered when a symbol or combination of symbols appears on the reels and multipliers are randomly selected for and vary with respective outcomes of the free spin feature. In Locke, the multiplier for each free spin is not determined by or contingent on which multiplier was selected in a previous free spin. In Wilson, Jr. the incrementing multiplier is increased based on a predetermined number of symbols appearing in a primary game of a slot machine. Wilson, Jr. teaches incrementing the multiplier to an increased value based on a previous value of the multiplier. Modifying the gaming device of Locke to include the incrementing multiplier for a primary game, as taught by Wilson, Jr. and as proposed by the Office Action, would require substantial change to the free spin feature of Locke. Such modification is not taught or suggested in either Locke or Wilson, Jr. One skilled in the art at the time of the invention would not be

motivated to make the proposed modification because it would destroy the random selection of multipliers in the free spin feature taught by Locke. Even if the incrementing multiplier symbol could be employed in the primary game of Locke, the resulting gaming device or method would function substantially as the free spin feature taught by Locke functions in that multipliers would be randomly selected for each free spin.

The Office Action provided additional reasoning regarding this proposed combination on page 14 of the Office Action. Page 14 of the Office Action notes that "the invention of Wilson and Locke both teach the use of multipliers in a reel based game, that they both include a random determination of the multiplier value, that over multiple plays the value of the multiplier would increase in both inventions." This statement is not accurate. Over multiple plays in Locke, the value of the multiplier may or may not increase depending on specific game outcomes. For example, for each of the five free spins disclosed in Locke, the slot machine may randomly select the same multiplier (i.e., 5x) in each of the free spins. Selection of the same multiplier over multiple plays does increase the selected multiplier.

Additionally, Wilson does not randomly determine the multiplier value as suggested on Page 14 of the Office Action for the reasons given above. Specifically, Page 14 of the Office Action states "[t]he selection of multiplier value is based on a random determination in both the prior art references where Locke bases the random selection off of varying probabilities in multiple game rounds (Locke Col 4:49-5:59), while Wilson alternatively maintains the probabilities and utilizes a cumulative value of the random number determinations to determine the multiplier value." In Wilson, the multiplier is increased for every ten power point symbols that appear on the reels in a primary game (col. 5, lines 43-48), and the value of any base award is randomly selected from one of a plurality of tables (Figs. 5A, 5B, and 5C).

In accordance with the above reasons, Applicants submit that the proposed modification of employing the incrementing multiplier or power point symbol of Wilson, Jr. to the gaming device of Locke is a product of impermissible hindsight since the incrementing multiplier of Wilson, Jr. teaches away from and destroys the randomly and independently selected multipliers taught by Locke.

Applicants submit that regardless of whether it would have been obvious to modify Locke to employ the multiplier symbol of Wilson, Jr., neither Locke or Wilson, Jr. individually, nor the gaming device or method resulting from the proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. teach, disclose or suggest an incrementor symbol as in independent claims 31 and 58. Independent claim 31 recites an incrementor symbol included in secondary symbols of a plurality of secondary reels displayed to a player in a secondary game and a processor which is programmed to control the secondary reels and increase the multiplier associated with each subsequent free spin of the secondary reels when one or more of the incrementor symbols occurs on the secondary reels in the free spins. Similarly, independent claim 58 recites determining whether an incrementor symbol appears on the reels, increasing a multiplier if the incrementor symbol appears on the reels, modifying the award using the multiplier and repeating at least these steps until there are no free spins remaining. The proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. does not teach or suggest this combination. The proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. teaches increasing the multiplier for every ten power point symbols that appear on the reels. In the proposed combination, the multiplier is not increased for every power point symbol that appears on the reels in a bonus game and thus the power point symbol for the incrementing multiplier of Wilson, Jr. cannot be characterized as an incrementor symbol in independent claims 31 and 58. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claims 31 and 58 are patentably distinguished over the proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. and in condition for allowance.

Neither Locke or Wilson, Jr. individually, nor the gaming device resulting from the proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. teach, disclose or suggest increasing a multiplier after each free spin or reel event, as in independent claims 17, 52 and 53. Independent claims 17, 52 and 53 recite that each subsequent multiplier is greater than or increased from each previous multiplier in each play, round or reel event of a bonus game. Specifically, independent claim 17 recites, among other elements, a bonus round including a plurality of free spins of the reels, a plurality of multipliers associated with the free spins of the reels, wherein the multiplier associated with each free spin of

the reels after a first free spin of the reels is greater than the multiplier associated with each free spin of the reels that precedes each free spin of the reels in each play of the bonus round. Similarly, independent claim 52 recites a secondary game which includes a plurality of symbols, a plurality of reel events employing the symbols and a different multiplier associated with each reel event, and a processor that for each and every reel event is programmed to increase the multiplier after that reel event for every subsequent reel event. Similarly, independent claim 53 recites, among other elements, modifying the award, if any, using a multiplier, providing the award to the player, increasing the multiplier after each free spin in each play of a bonus game for each subsequent free spin and repeating at least these steps until there are no free spins remaining. The proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. does not teach or suggest increasing the multiplier in each play, round or reel event of a bonus game as in independent claims 17, 52 and 53. The proposed combination teaches increasing the multiplier for every ten power point symbols that appear on the reels when only nine power point symbols are possible for any one spin of the reels (col. 5, lines 25-30 in Wilson, Jr.). Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claims 17, 52 and 53 are patentably distinguished over the proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. and in condition for allowance.

Neither Locke or Wilson, Jr. individually, nor the gaming device resulting from the proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. teach, disclose or suggest a multiplier associated with each free spin of the reels wherein at least one of the multipliers is determined based on the symbols that occur on the reels in at least one of the free spins of the secondary game, as in independent claim 39. Specifically, independent claim 39 includes, among other elements a secondary game which includes a plurality of reels, a plurality of symbols on the reels, a plurality of free spins of the reels, a multiplier associated with each free spin of the reels, and a processor that is programmed to determine at least one of the multipliers based on the symbols that occur on the reels in at least one of the free spins of the secondary game. The proposed combination does not teach or suggest this combination. The proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. teaches a multiplier based on the symbols which

occur in a primary game as taught by Wilson, Jr. or a multiplier randomly and independently selected in the free spins as taught by Locke. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claim 39 is patentably distinguished over the proposed combination of Locke and Wilson, Jr. and in condition for allowance.
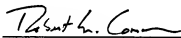
Claims 7 to 16, 18 to 38, 40 to 51, 54 to 57, 59 and 60 depend from one of independent claims 1, 17, 39, 52, 53 and 58 are also allowable for the reasons given above with respect to those independent claims, and because of the additional features in these claims.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Reply, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY: _Robert W. Connors_

Robert W. Connors
Reg. No. 46,639
Customer No. 29159
Phone: (312) 807-4214

Dated: December 20, 2006